

Oral Health Services

What are the services?

Several publicly funded programs and services throughout the state aim to increase access to preventive and treatment activities. A brief overview of them is provided below.

Oral Health Education, Promotion, and Prevention Programs

- WA State Oral Health Program Website. The WA State Oral Health Program maintains a website with educational and evidence-based information on oral health issues. The program promotes the use of Bright Futures oral health messages, in conjunction with other general health messages, to pregnant women, children and adolescents. Website: http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/mch/cahcp/oral_health.htm
- University of Washington (UW) Oral Health Collaborative. The UW Oral Health Collaborative is an outreach component of the Dental Hygiene Program that creates and delivers models for oral health education and prevention. The models involve local partners and can be replicated and sustained at the community level to improve the oral health of underserved children.
- UW School of Dentistry Pipeline, Practice, and Profession: Community-Based Dental Education. The UW School of Dentistry conducts a project to increase access to dental care for underserved populations by increasing recruitment and retention of disadvantaged and underrepresented minority students into dentistry.
- UW Community-Based Clinical Training. The UW School of Dentistry provides an opportunity for UW 4th year dental students to provide care in more than 15 community-based clinics statewide, including Seattle, Yakima Valley, Southwest Washington and Bellingham.

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- State Oral Health Program and Local Health Jurisdictions. The State MCH Oral Health Program contracts with 35 Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) to provide preventive dental services that include: oral health education, school-based sealants, screening for oral health needs and treatment, referrals to insurance programs and to local dental providers for services, etc. DOH website with access to LHJs under construction.
- Community and Migrant Health Centers (CMHCs). CMHCs provide health care services to uninsured, underinsured and low income clients with Medicaid or the Basic Health Plan. There are 25 CMHCs, (including 5 look-alikes) with a total of 135 sites, 58 of which offer dental services. There are also 21 free clinics, 3 of which provide dental services. (See *Safety Net Services* chapter for additional information). <http://www.wacmhc.org/>
- Tribal Health Clinics: Out of the 29 federally recognized tribes, there are 23 Tribal Health Clinics that provide dental services in Washington State. (See *Safety Net Services* chapter for additional information).
- Clinics at Dental Professional Training Programs. Dental clinics typically serving low income clients are operated by the University of Washington, eight Dental Hygiene and 8 Dental Assisting schools in Washington.

- UW Dental Education in the Care of Persons with Disabilities (DECOD). DECOD treats persons with severe disabilities and prepares dental professionals to meet their special oral health needs. DECOD also includes a mobile dental van for residents of long-term care facilities and the homebound. <http://www.dental.washington.edu/departments/oralmed/decod/>
- Mobile Dental Vans. Mobile Dental Vans provide dental care to community residents in areas which do not have access to care. Some vans are operated by: the Northwest Medical Teams (3 vans), Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, Olympic Community Action Program, DECOD, and the Free Clinic of SW Washington's Mobile Clinic.
- Volunteer groups. Many community professionals and organizations (charitable, religious, etc.) provide dental services on a voluntary basis for the underserved, often in connection with local dental professional societies.
- Medicaid. Under Health Services Recovery Administration, Medical Assistance pays for covered dental and dental-related services for children and adults. Children's services include the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry Program (ABCD) <http://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/maa/ProvRel/Dental/Dental.html>
- Kids Get Care. Operated by Seattle-King County, Kids Get Care promotes early integrated preventive physical, oral and developmental health services to children regardless of insurance status through attachment to a dental home. <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/kgc/>
- Sea-Tac Smiles. The King County Health Action Plan developed this project to test a model for increasing low-income residents' access to dental services by building capacity at dental assisting schools and providing community-based dental training for students through a full-time clinic. <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/kgc/smiles.htm>

How/where are the services provided?

- These programs and services provide either preventive or treatment opportunities in diverse settings throughout the state.

Eligibility

- Most of these services focus primarily on low-income MCH groups.

Issues/concerns

- Washington children suffer more tooth decay than the rest of the nation, a problem that is exacerbated by the lower rate of fluoridated public water systems in the state.
- Additional partnerships among providers, public health and communities are needed to help improve the oral health status of Washingtonians.